

Watsonville High School Foundation

2005 Alumni Hall of Fame

Born in Watsonville in 1925, **Dr. Lloyd Smith** is the fourth generation of his family to live in the Pajaro Valley. He attended local elementary schools and, following his graduation from Watsonville High School in 1943, enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps to serve his country in World War II. In the military, he studied engineering at Southwestern University and electronics in Newport, Rhode Island. From 1943 to 1946, he served as a sergeant in the aviation branch of the U.S. Marine Corps and was assigned to the Marine dive-bomber group in the South Pacific from 1945 to 1946.

Following World War II, he returned to California to complete his education. He attended Salinas Junior College (Hartnell) in 1947 and received an A.A. degree. He continued on to the University of California at San Francisco and in 1951 graduated from the UCSF College of Dentistry with B.S. and D.D.S. degrees. During this time (1948-1951), he also served as a Lieutenant in the Dental Corps of the U.S. Naval Reserves.

While at the UCSF, he met and married Annette Gilpatric Smith. They have been married for 53 years, have 4 children, and four grandchildren. Returning to Watsonville, Dr. Smith began his private practice in 1951. He continued in Watsonville until his retirement 43 years later in 1994.

Dr. Smith served on the Board of Directors of the Monterey Bay Dental Society and was a member of the California State Dental Association. He was on the dental staff of Watsonville Community Hospital, serving as Chairman for three years. He was also Chairman of the Cabrillo College Dental Assisting Program and Chairman of the coordinating group for the Watsonville Children's National Dental Health Week.

Dr. Smith served on the Watsonville Elementary Board of Education, the Watsonville High School Board of Education, the Santa Cruz County Board of Education and was the Education Chairman for the Watsonville Chamber of Commerce. He served in many organizations: Corralitos Padres, SIRS, Lions Club, Masonic Lodge, Elks Club, P.V. Rod & Gun Club, SCIOTS drill team, March of Dimes Polio Foundation (after his oldest son contracted Polio) and the Boy Scouts – he was the first Cub Scout and the youngest Eagle Scout, up to that time in California. He served on the Monterey Bay Area Council of Boys Scouts of America for 28 years.

Snow skiing and golf are Dr. Smith's favorite sports. While a student at WHS, he was a member of the Sno Catz and the golf team and later, as an adult, was a member and chaperone of the Sno Catz.

Dr. Smith was named Man of the Year by the Watsonville Junior Chamber of Commerce, was the recipient of the prestigious Silver Beaver Award, presented to the Scouts' highest civilian, and also received military honors for his service during World War II.

The *Register-Pajaronian* proclaimed his retirement in 1994, an "end of an era."

Harry "Rich" Wiggins grew up in Watsonville, attending Mintie White Elementary and E.A. Hall School prior to his four years at Watsonville High School. As a youth he was active in Scouting, earning the rank of Eagle Scout. He was involved in music in high school and was the President of the Watsonville High Dance Band. He graduated from Watsonville High School in the class of 1955.

Harry attended California State Polytechnic College in San Luis Obispo, graduating with a B.S. in Printing Engineering in 1959. Concurrent with graduation at "Cal Poly", he also received a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army through the ROTC program.

His military career as an Infantry Officer included assignments in Korea, two tours in Vietnam and many assignments in the United States. After graduating from the United States Army Command and General Staff College, he was stationed with the Embassy in Manila, Philippines for three years. From the Philippines he was assigned to the General Staff in the Pentagon in Washington D.C. where he served four years working on readiness issues with Army National Guard Commands of all fifty states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. While on active duty, the Army selected him to attend the University of Alabama where he earned an MBA and Masters in Industrial Relations.

His military awards include the Combat Infantry Badge (only awarded in combat), paratrooper wings, General Staff Badge, three Commendation Medals, U.S. Army Air Medal (only awarded in combat), three Bronze Stars, Dept. of Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the Legion of Merit. He retired in 1984 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

After retiring from the Army, he began a career managing large Printing Companies in Alexandria, Virginia and then in San Francisco. For ten years he has been a consultant specializing in Environment and Government Regulatory matters.

Harry and his wife, Clarice Giberson, returned to Watsonville in 1991. They are the parents of Richard Nelson of Phoenix, Arizona and Gina Kennedy of Rome, Italy. They have two grandsons.

Since returning to Watsonville, Harry has been the Scoutmaster of a Boy Scout Troop in Pajaro (this Troop was sponsored after a teen-age youth and his sister were killed in Pajaro). Ten of these boys have earned their Eagle Rank. He was awarded the Silver Beaver Award, the highest a volunteer can earn. He also is involved with the Salvation Army Advisory Board, starting the "An Evening of Brass" Concert in the Mello Center. He is on the Executive Board of the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce. He is responsible for organizing the community to purchase the U.S. Historical flags and the 50 flags which are on permanent display in the Mello Center Foyer. He works with community leaders to organize Veterans Day Ceremonies and helped to organize a special ceremony to honor police, firemen and paramedics after the 9-11 attack.

John Sipin, son of John and Ethel Sipin, attended Watsonville High School graduating in the class of 1964. While attending WHS, John was very active in athletics. During his four years he played on the basketball, football and baseball teams.

John played professional baseball for 15 years – six years in the United States and nine in Japan. He signed professionally in 1966 with the St. Louis Cardinals as a shortstop. In the Florida State A league, his first professional manager was Sparky Anderson. John was a 1968 AA Texas League All Star. During John's first major league game, his first two at bats he hit back to back triples off Ken Holtzman of the Chicago Cubs.

Mr. Sipin was a Puerto Rico Winter League All Star in 1970 and 1971 as an outfielder, joining right fielder Reggie Jackson and center fielder Don Baylor on the team.

In 1972 John joined the Taiyo Whales of the Central Coast League in Japan. He was the first foreign player to be traded to the Yomiuri Giants in the Central League. While playing second base on the Yomiuri Giants, John played next to first baseman Sadaharu Oh, who holds the world record for home runs at 868. John Sipin was the first foreigner to hit over 200 home runs. In total, John hit 221 home runs while playing Japanese Professional Baseball and 350 during his entire professional baseball career.

John was voted "Best Nine" in all of Japanese Professional Baseball four times. John was the first foreign baseball player to receive the "Golden Glove" award in Japan. He received this honor four times. He was also the first foreign baseball player to win the MVP award in two of the "Hall of Fame" series games played in the last ten years. John was voted the "Best Nine" ever to play Japanese Professional Baseball.

There are five people who John categorizes "as one of his favorites." Tommy Rowan, his little league coach for four years, introduced him to hardball and taught him he was not bigger than the game or his competition. John believes the history of WHS sports should always start with Emmett Geysler. Coach Geysler, whose deep baritone voice was unmistakable, ruled Monterey Bay when there were only Monterey, Salinas, Watsonville, and Santa Cruz high schools. Ron Staley, who believed in and encouraged him, took him from Lightweight to Varsity Basketball. Bob Bugalski, a strict disciplinarian coach, taught the whole team what it needed to do to win a championship.

John has been married for 26 years to his wife, Gizelle, a graduate of Soquel High School. His two daughters seem to have inherited their father's athletic ability. Alisha, 21 years old, will be graduating from Sacramento State this spring and is going on to law school. Alisha's basketball number is the first retired jersey at Soquel High School. Alisha and John may be the only father-daughter in Santa Cruz County to have their jersey's retired. Kamala Sipin, a junior at Sacramento State, is studying communications and marketing. She was Freshman of the Year at Soquel High School in varsity volleyball, and transferred to St. Francis High School in Mt. View her junior year. Kamala was All-League Varsity Volleyball her senior year and the team ranked number one in the state of California and number two in the United States.

Eugene Smith began playing the trumpet when he came to Mintie White in the fourth grade. This is also the time he joined the Boy Scouts Troop 599. In his two years at Mintie White, three at E.A. Hall, and through his junior year at WHS, scouting and music occupied much of his time. During his senior year music captured most of his time and attention.

As a sophomore, Gene joined the Watsonville Band and traveled with them to Chicago and Montreal during the summer. What an experience for a sixteen year old! Marching down Michigan Avenue, playing for the U.S. Secretary of State and performing at the World's Fair.

The direction of his life changed when WHS got a new band director. Mike Rubino showed them what bands could really do. It was during this time Gene decided to become a music teacher.

After graduating from WHS in 1969, Gene went to San Jose State University (they had the only all brass college band west of the Mississippi River). There are three teachers who Gene feels changed his life: Bill Nicolosi who taught him to "Always Take Care of Your People"; Gail Royer who taught him what it takes to be "The Best At What You Do"; and Darrel Johnston who showed him just what "Music Education Is All About." Gene graduated from San Jose State in 1977 and completed his teaching credential. In 1978 he started his first and only job teaching in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. He began teaching band on the "Junior High side" of Salsipuedes School and also at three elementary schools. After four terrific years, he achieved the goal he'd set in 1969 – he became the band director at Watsonville High School.

This was the hardest eleven years of his career, but also some of the best. He helped to build on of the best high school programs in the area: concert bands that received "Excellent" and "Superior" ratings, marching bands that earned Sweepstakes awards in parade competition and – the capstone - placed Third in the state in our class in field competition!

When cutbacks hit in 1993, Mr. Smith returned to E.A.Hall, teaching chorus and general music. When the teacher hired for WHS quit just before school started that year, Gene returned to direct the band for 2 more years, in addition to E.A. Hall.

Beginning in 1999, P.V.U.S.D. received substantial grants from the Packard Foundation for 5 years. During that time, music was given to thousands of students in the district. As Music Coordinator he guided the rebuilding of the music program. He is now also teaching at E.A. Hall and WHS as well.

Gene is an active member of CMEA, California Assoc. for Music Education; was named CCS Outstanding Music Educator of the Year for 1996; named Nationally Registered Music Educator by National Assoc. for Music Education, MENC, in 1992; was included in the MENC Walk of Fame in Washington D.C. in 2004; and has been a member of the Watsonville Band for 39 years, also serving as Assistant Conductor, Drum Major and President of the Board of Directors.

Gene and his wife Kathy, also a graduate of WHS, Class of 1969, have 4 children; Anna lives in Salinas, Gene is a freshman (music major) at Fresno State, Mark lives and works in Las Vegas and Colette works in San Francisco.